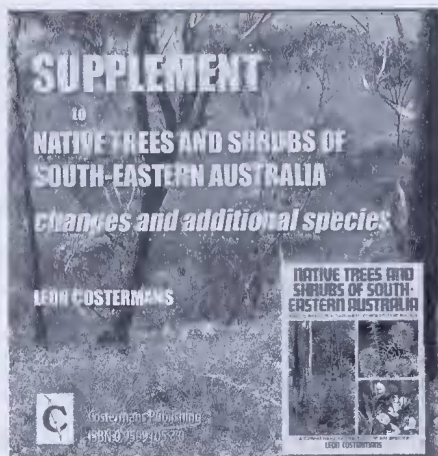


Supplement to native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia: changes and additional species

by Leon Costermans

Publisher: *Costermans Publishing, 2006.*
 CD-ROM. ISBN 0959910530. RRP \$25.00



Native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia was first published in 1981. A revised edition was published in 1983 with only relatively minor changes. It is still in print and students lovingly refer to it as 'Costermans'. This book has become a standard reference and field guide for a wide variety of people including working botanists and ecologists, students, land managers, field naturalists and many others. And little wonder, it is easy to use, comprehensive and has good quality drawings and photographs. The many reprints since then essentially have had no changes in content other than the inclusion of brief lists of amendments in printings from 1992 onwards and a separate 8-page printed supplement was made available in September 1992, but many taxonomic revisions and descriptions have occurred since. Thus the book really should be completely revised which would be a major task taking years, over which time more changes would occur! The book also would be more expensive as it would need to be enlarged and restructured. For these reasons the author felt that the most practical and economical way to bring this book up to date with taxonomic changes was to provide a supplement on CD-ROM.

The CD-ROM contains a number of files which are listed on the back cover of the case:

1. READ ME FIRST which provides recommendations for most effective use.
2. INTRODUCTION where the author explains what brought about the need for

this supplement. The author also explains in some detail why plant names change, the importance of knowing the taxonomic history of plants and how one can determine the taxonomic history using author citations, useful information for the novice or those who have not quite understood these facets within their study of botany.

3. SUPPLEMENT which consists of three versions having identical content.

- A screen version which has a smaller file allowing faster navigation
- A screen version with higher resolution photos, hence a larger file, which allows viewing of detail.
- A print version in the book's vertical format.

The supplement includes:

- Copyright conditions.
- An alphabetical listing of 378 species with hyperlinks to the pages on which they are described or photographed. Eighty species not included in the book occur on this list.
- Part A: Changes and consequent additions. This explains the many name changes that have occurred and provides additional information on many species occurring in *Native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia*. Each name change can be verified by the reader as reference to the author of the name change and to the journal article in which the change is described is provided with a full reference given under References in Part B. This highlights the great atten-

tion to detail that Leon Costermans is known for and which makes this CD such a valuable resource.

- Part B: 'New' species, new names for 'old' species and some additional species.
- References. This includes links to a variety of useful websites, ideal for the uninitiated in particular.
- Photographs. These are of a high resolution and can be enlarged greatly to allow critical comparison of key identification characteristics with specimens under investigation. This cannot be done with the photographs in a book.
- Map which includes all localities referred to in the supplement, a most useful resource.
- List of botanical authors

This CD will become as popular as the book to which it is a supplement. It is extremely user friendly, even to the 'CD-ROM novice'. The author explains how to use the CD in simple terms. The many

hyperlinks makes navigation between sections and points of interest extremely convenient. Familiarity with Acrobat Reader, which is used by the CD, makes it even more so. For example, one can simply press on the 'find' icon (the one with the binoculars) and locate any word. The readme first file gives some basic instructions on using Acrobat Reader as well as the suggestions for most effective use of the CD, so following the author's instructions is advised.

The *Supplement to Native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia: changes and additional species* is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in identifying plants and, at the recommended retail price of \$25.00, no-one should be without it!

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Treatment of Eucalypts in *Supplement to native trees and shrubs of south-eastern Australia*

Eucalyptus taxonomy is complex and fluid to the extent that ill-informed observers have to deal with at least three versions of eucalypts of south-eastern Australia and it is little wonder that they become confused, particularly with the many changes of names and statuses and with the regular flow of new taxa. To his credit the author has not attempted to impose his own version of the taxonomy of the eucalypts on his readers. Instead he has meticulously presented the entire range of adjustments, including concise accounts of the most recently described new taxa, and, in effect, taken a somewhat neutral position. His approach has provided an alternative perspective to the sometimes biased books and CDs which tend to peddle a particular taxonomic philosophy. His field guide offers the opportunity for the users to form their own opinions regarding the taxonomic merits of the various contentious taxa. It also provides an important level of continuity of what has now become a botanical icon.

As one who is thoroughly conversant with the recent trends in eucalyptus taxon-

omy and with the accompanying literature, I can attest that the author is accurate in his information. However, I must point out that he has not dealt adequately with the taxonomy of the contentious *Eucalyptus silvestris*. There are actually three versions of its status: that it is a species in its own right; that it is a form of *E. microcarpa*; and that it is a form of *E. odorata*. Whilst he has noted information given by the original author and in the Flora of Victoria (1997), he has not made references to more recent perspectives such as those by Nicolle (1997), *Eucalypts of South Australia*, and Ross and Walsh (2003), *A Census of The Vascular Plants of Victoria, Seventh Edition*. With regard to the latter, this is the Melbourne Herbarium's official account of Victoria's eucalypts.

A second concern has been that the use of photographs of herbarium specimens rather than line-drawings as supplements may decrease the visual quality of the information provided. The practice of using photographs of herbarium specimens has become common in recent taxonomic